



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Getting Your Vehicle Ready For Summer

Summer 's heat, dust, and stop-and-go traffic will take its toll on your car or truck. You can lessen the odds of mechanical failure through periodic maintenance. Your vehicle will last longer, have a higher resale value, and you can survive summer trips unscathed - physically and financially.

Some of the following tips are easy to do; others require an auto mechanic.

Cooling system. The greatest cause of summer breakdowns is overheating. Completely flush the cooling system and refill it every 2 years. Periodically check the level, condition, and concentration of the coolant. (Mechanics usually recommend a 50/50 mix of antifreeze and water.) Never remove the radiator cap until the engine has thoroughly cooled.

Air conditioning . Have the system examined by a qualified technician. A marginally operating system will fail in hot weather.

Hoses and belts . Inspect radiator hoses for cracks, wear, and leaks. Replace any that show wear. Do the same for belts.

Oil. Change your oil and oil filter as specified in your owner 's manual - more often (every 3, 000 miles) if you make frequent short jaunts, extended trips with lots of luggage, or tow a trailer.

Engine performance. Replace other filters (air, fuel, etc.) as your manual recommends - more often in dusty conditions. Correct drive problems (hard starts, rough idling, stalling, diminished power) at a reputable shop.

Windshield wipers. A dirty windshield causes eye fatigue and can pose a safety hazard. Replace worn blades and keep your windshield-solvent tank filled.

Lights. Inspect all lights and bulbs. Replace burned-out bulbs, and periodically clean dirt and insects from all lenses. To prevent scratching the lens, use a soft, dry rag.

Tires. Check tire pressure at least once a month. Do it while the tires are "cool," not right after pulling into a gas station or your driveway. Don 't forget your spare tire, and be sure the jack is

in good condition. Examine tires for tread life and uneven wearing. Check the sidewalls for cuts and nicks. If you have uneven tread wear or your car pulls to one side, you need an alignment. Rotate tires about every 5, 000 miles.

Brakes. Inspect brakes as recommended in your owner 's manual, or sooner if you notice pulsations, grabbing, noises, or longer stopping distances. Brake problems should be corrected promptly.

Battery. Check battery fluid level monthly. For routine maintenance: Scrape away corrosion from posts and cable connections, clean all surfaces, and retighten all connections. Avoid contact with corrosive deposits and battery acid. Wear proper eye and skin protection while servicing or cleaning battery. If batteries are sealed or "maintenance-free,"take it to an authorized battery service center.

Emergencies. Always have the following items on hand for safety and comfort: a windshield shade for reducing heat build-up inside the vehicle, a basic automotive tool kit, a gallon of water, a gallon of antifreeze, and an emergency kit containing a first-aid kit, flashlight with extra batteries, warning devices such as flares or reflective triangles, and jumper cables. Consider buying a cellular phone or citizens band radio for summoning help, but please pull off the road before using it.